

Message Text

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EXDIS

FOR ARA LUERS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, OAS, PQ, CU, MX

SUBJ: MEXICAN PARTICIPATION AT HAVANA CONFERENCE ON PUERTO RICO

REF: MEXICO 7744

1. OAS SECRETARY GENERAL ALEJANDRO ORFILA CAME FOR THE INFORME AND IS BEING MADE MUCH OF BY THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT AND PRESS. (WE WILL REPORT ON THIS IN SEPARATE CABLE). LAST NIGHT HE TOLD ME THAT HE HAD SEEN PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA AND "AS REQUESTED BY THE DEPARTMENT" RAISED OUR CONCERN RE PUERTO RICO AND POSSIBLE MEXICAN PARTICIPATION IN HAVANA CONFERENCE. HE SAID THAT ECHEVERRIA REPLIED THAT HE WAS AWARE OF THIS THROUGH MY OWN EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN AND WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE WAS TAKING THE NECESSARY STEPS. FURTHERMORE IN ORDER TO REDUCE THE "STRIDENCY" EMANATING FROM HAVANA HE WAS SENDING RABASA THERE ON A CONFIDENTIAL MISSION. I WAS AT FIRST ALARMED AS IT SOUNDED AS IF RABASA WOULD ACTUALLY ATTEND THE HAVANA CONFERENCE BUT IN A FURTHER CONVERSATION TODAY ORFILA HAS LAID MY FEARS TO REST.

2. APPARENTLY RABASA'S PROJECTED VISIT WOULD NOT COINCIDE WITH THE CONFERENCE ON PUERTO RICO, BUT HE WOULD GO TO HAVANA "CONFIDENTIALLY" CHARGED BY THE PRESIDENT WITH THE MISSION OF ENCOURAGING A "RAPPROCHMENT" BETWEEN

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CUBA AND THE U.S. AND CUBA AND THE OAS. ACCORDING TO

ORFILA, RABASA WOULD STRESS TO CASTRO THAT IF CUBA WANTS RESUMPTION OF TRADE AND A GENERAL "RAPPROCHMENT" IT ALSO MUST WORK FOR IT AND THE BEST WAY TO CREATE A FAVORABLE ATMOSPHERE IS TO REDUCE THE STRIDENCY IN REGARD TO THE U.S. AND VERY PARTICULARLY ON THE PUERTO RICAN ISSUE. ORFILA HAD STRESSED TO ECHEVERRIA THE FACT THAT ANY STIRRING UP OF THE PUERTO RICAN ISSUE WAS AN INTERFERENCE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF BOTH THE U.S. AND PUERTO RICO AND IN THE LONG RUN WOULD CREATE A CLIMATE AMONG RIGHTIST ELEMENTS IN THE U.S. FOR OTHER POSSIBLE U.S. INTERVENTIONS. RABASA WOULD ALSO SUGGEST TO CASTRO THE ADVISABILITY OF PLANING THE WHOLE MATTER OF RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. AND ANY PRENEGOIATIONS AS WELL AS EVENTUAL NEGOTIATIONS IN THE CHARGE OF SOMEONE OTHER THAN FOREIGN MINISTER RAUL ROA, IN VIEW OF ROA'S OWN LONG HISTROY OF STRIDENCY. I UNDERSTAND RABASA MAY BE INSTRUCTED TO SUGGEST CARLOS RAFAEL RODRIQUEZ OR PERHAPS PRESIDENT OSWALDO DORTICOS AS MORE SUITABLE FOR SUCH A TASK. THE ADVISABILITY OF CUBA ACCEPTING WILLINGNESS TO ASSUME SOME FORM OF COMPENSATION FOR EXPROPRIATED AMERICAN PROPERTIES WOULD ALSO BE URGED ON CASTRO AS WELL AS INCREASED GIVE ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES.

3. I UNDERSTAND THAT ORFILA MADE A PTICH TO ECHEVERRIA THAT THE RABASA MISSION BE ALSO UTILIZED TO PREPARE THE WAY FOR A RE-ENTRY OF CUBA INTO ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE OAS. STRESSING THAT THIS WAS IN THE LONG RUN INTEREST OF THE HEMISPHERE ANB PARTICULARLY OF MEXICO ITSELF. I UNDERSTAND FROM PERSONS TRAVELLING WITH ORFILA THAT HE HIMSELF IS INTERESTED IN VISITING HAVANA AT AN OPPORTUNE MOMENT AND THAT THIS ALSO MIGHT BE PROPOSED BY RABASA.

4. ORFILA HAS JUST BEEN UNEXPECTEDLY ASKED TO SEE THE PRESIDENT FOR A SECOND TIME HAVING BEEN INVITED TO COME TODAY FOR A PRIVATE CONVERSATION TO BE FOLLOWED BY LUNCH AT WHICH AMBASSADOR DE LA COLINA AND PERHAPS OTHERS ARE PRESENT. I UNDERSTAND HE EXPECTS TO DISCUSS FURTHER BOTH U.S.-CUBA AND CUBA-OAS MATTERS AS WELL AS THE POSSIBILITY FOR A MORE ACTIVE MEXICAN PARTICIPATION IN OAS ACTIVITIES. ORFILA HOPES TO OBTAIN A SIZEABLE MEXICAN DONATION TO INCREASE OAS PROGRAMS IN THE
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CULTURAL AND SPORTS FIELDS.

5. RETURNING TO THE MATTER OF MEXICAN PARTICIPATION IN HAVANA CONFERENCE I HAVE BEEN SOMEWHAT UNCOMFORTABLE BY CONTINUING REPORTS THAT IMPORTANT PRI OFFICIALS ARE STILL PLANNING TO ATTEND THE HAVANA CONFERENCE. ACCORDINGLY I RAISED THIS MATTER AGAIN WITH FERNANDO GUTIERREZ (ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF INTERIOR) POINTING OUT ONCE AGAIN OUR

CONCERN AT THE POSSIBLE EVENTUALITY AND STRESSING THAT IN
THE EYES OF WORLD PUBLIC OPINION IT WAS ALMOST
IMPOSSIBLE TO SEPARATE PRI AND GOM AND MY WORRY THAT IMPORTANT
PRI PARTICIPATION MIGHT BE INTERPRETED AS MEXICAN INTERA
FERENCE AND ALMOST AS AN UNFRIENDLY ACTION. GUTIERREZ
HAS JUST CALLED BACK THAT HE HAS AGAIN DISCUSSED THIS WITH
THE PRESIDENT AND WAS AGAIN TOLD NOT TO WORRY THAT THE MATTER
WAS UNDER CONTROL. HE DID OBSERVE HOWEVER THAT WHILE
THIS PRESUMABLY MEANT (ECHEVERRIA CAN BE SPHINX-LIKE EVEN
WITH HIS OWN) THAT NO IMPORTANT PRI OFFICIALS WOULD GO TO
HAVANA, THIS ASSURANCE DID NOT ELIMINATE THE PROBABILITY
THAT MEMBERS OF OTHER SO-CALLED POLITICAL PARTIES OF THE MEXICAN
LEFT WOULD BE GOING TO HAVANA.

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